

Message Text

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S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 1858

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, ET, US

SUBJECT: PROPOSED VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER TO WASHINGTON

1. SUMMARY. FONMIN DR. MINASSIE CALLED ME IN ON FEBRUARY 18 TO SAY EMPEROR REQUESTS THAT AN IEG DELEGATION LED BY PRIME MINISTER BE RECEIVED IN WASHINGTON IN NEAR FUTURE. PURPOSE OF VISIT WILL BE TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED US MILITARY ASSISTANCE. THE EMPEROR HOPES THAT PRESIDENT NIXON WILL RECEIVE THE PRIME MINISTER.

2. DELEGATION WILL ALSO CONSIST OF DR. MINASSIE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, MINISTER OF FINANCE AND SOME SUPPORTING STAFF. APPOINTMENTS ARE DESIRED NOT ONLY WITH THE PRESIDENT BUT ALSO WITH SECSTATE, SECDEF, AND SUCH OTHER OFFICIALS AS USG CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE. DR. MINASSIE SAID IDEAL TIMING FOR VISIT WOULD BE THREE OR FOUR DAYS AFTER MARCH 11 COMMENCEMENT HIS OWN WASHINGTON VISIT, WHICH WILL CONCENTRATE ON CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS. PRIME MINISTER IS PREPARED BE VERY FLEXIBLE ON THIS HOWEVER, AND WOULD BE WILLING COME SLIGHTLY LATER OR PRIOR MARCH 11, INCLUDING "DAY AFTER TOMORROW" IF THAT PREFERABLE FROM WASHINGTON STANDPOINT. EMPEROR'S DESIRE IS SIMPLY THAT VISIT TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

3. DR. MINASSIE SAID EMPEROR REGARDS VISIT AS VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE "WE STAND AT A CROSSROADS AND CANNOT REMAIN PASSIVE WHERE OUR SECURITY SITUATION BECOMES EVER MORE ALARMING." HE THEN DE-

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SCRIBED THE SOVIET-SOMALI THREAT ALONG FAMILIAR LINES, INCLUDING STATEMENT THAT "WE CANNOT HAVE A REPETITION OF 1935, WHEN OUR

MILITARY EQUIPMENT WAS TOTALLY INADEQUATE." HE MENTIONED SOMALI ENTRY INTO ARAB LEAGUE AS NEWEST OMINOUS DEVELOPMENT. MINASSIE SAID IEG BELIEVES IT MUST NOW "MAKE A MAXIMUM EFFORT" AND EXHAUST EVERY POSSIBILITY FOR OBTAINING MORE AND BETTER EQUIPMENT. THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE WOULD NEVER FORGIVE THEIR GOVERNMENT IF IT DID NOT MAKE SUCH AN EFFORT AT THIS TIME. THE DELEGATION WILL THEREFORE SEEK TO DETERMINE WHETHER USG AND IEG CAN CONTINUE TO "STAND TOGETHER AS WE HAVE FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS." AT A MINIMUM, IT WILL SEEK TO FIND OUT PRECISELY WHERE THE LIMITATIONS ON USG/IEG COOPERATION ARE LOCATED AND WILL THUS OBTAIN A CLEAR PICTURE OF "WHERE WE STAND."

4. FONMIN SAID DELEGATION WILL WISH TO DISCUSS: 1) COMMON USG/IEG INTERESTS AND CONCERNS; 2) THE GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM; AND 3) A "MUCH LARGER SCALE MILITARY SALES CREDIT PROGRAM. IN THIS THIRD CATEGORY IT WILL SEEK PRECISE INFORMATION ON AMOUNTS AVAILABLE IN FUTURE AND ON CREDIT TERMS.

5. DR MINASSIE SAID THAT, IF USG CANNOT PROVIDE THE EQUIPMENT WHICH ETHIOPIA DESPERATELY NEEDS AT PRESENT, "I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE CAN DO."

6. FONMIN SAID IEG WOULD LIKE KEEP PLANNED VISIT CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THERE MIGHT PERHAPS BE A JOINT ANNOUNCEHURFPKHG TIMI MDD F UGGESTED#DURATION OF VISIT. I PROMISED SEEK EARLY REPLY.

7. COMMENT: IMPORTANCE WHICH EMPEROR ATTACHES TO THIS VIST IS UNDERSTANDABLE IN VIEW IEG'S RELUCTANCE TURN ELSEWHERE FOR SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND ITS HOPE THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS MIDDLE EAST WAR, OIL CRISIS, INCREASED US NAVAL PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN, AND PROSPECTIVE OPENING OF SUEZ CANAL MAY HAVE CREATED A MORE FAVORABLE CLIMATE FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE THAN EXISTED DURING MOST OF 1973. IT IS LIKELY THAT PRIME MINISTER WILL STRESS ARGUMENT THAT INCREASED MILITARY ASSISTANCE WOULD NOT ONLY BENEFIT ETHIOPIA BUT WOULD HELP PREVENT A SOVIET DOMINANCE IN HORN OF AFRICA WHICH WOULD BE HIGHLY PREJUDICIAL TO US INTERESTS

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IN ARABIAN PENINSULA AND INDIAN OCEAN. IN CONTRAST HG EMPEROR'S VISIT LAST MAY, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT PRIME MINISTER WILL PUT EVEN MORE STRESS ON MASSIVE CREDIT RATHER THAN GRANT PROGRAM, AND MORE STRESS ON LEVEL OF US RESOURCES MADE AVAILABLE THAN ON A SHOPPING LIST.

8. ALTHOUGH FONMIN DID NOT STRESS POINT, SOME OF HIS REMARKS CLEARLY REVEALED EMPEROR'S BELIEF THAT EVEN A VISIT WHICH PRODUCED NO POSITIVE RESULTS WHATSOEVER, WOULD OFFER ADVANTAGES OF
1) PROVING TO ALL CONCERNED THAT EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT HAD BEEN

MADE TO OBTAIN MORE US MILITARY ASSISTANCE, AND 2) PERMITTING IEG
TO KNOW FOR SURE WHERE IT STANDS WITH US AND ENABLING IT TO PLAN
ACCORDINGLY. IT THEREFORE APPEARS UNLIKELY THAT EVEN THE MOST
PESSIMISTIC PREDICTIONS REGARDING OUTCOME OF VISIT WOULD SIGNI-
FICANTLY DIMINISH EMPEROR'S DESIRE THAT IT TAKE PLACE.
WYMAN

NOTE BY OCT: #AS RECEIVED. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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